

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising:
- a receiver capable of being coupled to a network, said receiver to receive at least one media data packet from at least two sources forming a media conference, each media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a compressed media signal and packet overhead, wherein the receiver removes the packet overhead;
- an energy detection and talker selection unit coupled to said receiver to:
- determine at least one speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals; and
- select a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based on the determined speech parameters.
2. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 1, wherein the media data packets are audio data packets and the compressed media signals defined by the media data packets are compressed audio signals.
3. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 2, wherein the speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals is a number of bytes within each of the compressed media signals.
4. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 2, wherein the speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals is a pitch value within each of the compressed media signals.

5. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 2, wherein the speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals is an energy level corresponding to each of the compressed media signals.

6. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 1, wherein the media data packets are audio/video data packets and the compressed media signals defined by the media data packets are compressed audio/video signals.

7. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 1, wherein to select a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers, the energy detection and talker selection unit operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal contains speech based on the corresponding speech parameter;

if determined that the compressed media signal contains speech, determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to a previously selected talker; and

if determined that the compressed media signal does not correspond to a previously selected talker, determine whether a maximum number of talkers parameter is met, discard the compressed media signal in the case that the maximum number of talkers parameter is met and select the source corresponding to the compressed media signal as a talker within the media conference in the case that the maximum number of talkers parameter is not met.

8. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 1 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit, the output unit, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to a talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to a talker,

encapsulate the compressed media signal and output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the sources within the media conference except the source corresponding to the compressed media signal.

9. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 1, wherein the set of the sources within the media conference selected as talkers comprises one of first and second sources selected within the media conference as primary and secondary talkers respectively, one of the sources selected within the media conference as a lone talker, and none of the sources selected within the media conference as a talker.

a | 10. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 9 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the lone talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the lone talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal and output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the sources within the media conference except the source corresponding to the compressed media signal.

11. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 9 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to one of the primary and secondary talkers within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to one of the primary and secondary talkers, encapsulate the compressed media signal and output the encapsulated

compressed media signal to the sources within the media conference except the source corresponding to the compressed media signal.

12. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 9 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker within the media conference; and

a1 if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal, output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the primary talker within the media conference, determine whether the compressed media signal has been generated for previously, save the compressed media signal if not previously generated for; and discard the compressed media signal if previously generated for.

13. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 9 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal, output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the primary talker within the media conference, determine whether the compressed media signal has been generated for previously; if not previously generated for, decompress the compressed media signal, resulting in a secondary media signal, and save the secondary media signal; and discard the compressed media signal if previously generated for.

14. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 9 further comprising an output

unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

a) if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal; output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; decompress the compressed media signal, resulting in a primary media signal; determine whether a corresponding secondary media signal is saved; if a corresponding secondary media signal is not saved, generate a secondary media signal; mix the primary and secondary media signals into a single combined media signal; encapsulate the combined media signal; and output the encapsulated combined media signal to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

15. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 14, wherein the output unit further operates to decompress the secondary media signal prior to mixing it with the primary media signal if the secondary media signal is saved only in compressed form.

16. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 9 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal; output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; decompress the compressed media signal, resulting in a primary media signal; determine whether a corresponding secondary media signal is saved; if a corresponding secondary media signal is not saved, monitor for receipt of a media

data packet from the secondary talker for a predetermined time period; if the predetermined time period expires and no media data packet corresponding to the secondary talker has been received, generate a secondary media signal; mix the primary and secondary media signals into a single combined media signal; encapsulate the combined media signal; and output the encapsulated combined media signal to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

91 17. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 9 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal; output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; determine whether a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is saved; if a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is not saved, generate a compressed media signal for the secondary talker; encapsulate the compressed media signals corresponding to the primary and secondary talkers into a combined media data packet; and output the combined media data packet to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

18. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 9 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

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if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal; output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; determine whether a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is saved; if a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is not saved, monitor for receipt of a media data packet from the secondary talker for a predetermined time period; if the predetermined time period expires and no media data packet corresponding to the secondary talker has been received, generate a compressed media signal for the secondary talker; encapsulate the compressed media signals corresponding to the primary and secondary talkers into a combined media data packet; and output the combined media data packet to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

19. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 1, wherein the set of the sources within the media conference selected as talkers comprises one of first, second and third sources selected within the media conference as primary, secondary and tertiary talkers, first and second sources selected within the media conference as primary and secondary talkers respectively, one of the sources selected within the media conference as a lone talker, and none of the sources selected within the media conference as a talker.

20. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 19 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the tertiary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the tertiary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal and output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the primary and secondary talkers within the media conference.

21. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 19 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the tertiary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the tertiary talker, decompress the compressed media signal, resulting in a tertiary media signal; save the tertiary media signal; separately mix the tertiary media signal with primary and secondary media signals to generate a first mixed media signal and a second mixed media signal respectively; encapsulate the first and second mixed media signals; and output the first and second mixed media signals to the secondary and primary talkers respectively within the media conference.

22. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising conferencing control logic to:

receive at least one media data packet from at least two sources forming a media conference, each media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a compressed media signal and packet overhead;

remove the packet overhead;

determine at least one speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals; and

select a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based on the determined speech parameters.

23. (currently amended) A method for selecting a set of talkers within a media conference, comprising:

receiving at least one media data packet from at least two sources forming a media

conference, each media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a compressed media signal and packet overhead;

removing the packet overhead;

determining at least one speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals; and

selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based on the determined speech parameters.

24. (original) A method according to claim 23, wherein the media data packets are audio data packets and the compressed media signals defined by the media data packets are compressed audio signals.

25. (original) A method according to claim 24, wherein the speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals is a number of bytes within each of the compressed media signals.

26. (original) A method according to claim 24, wherein the speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals is a pitch value within each of the compressed media signals.

27. (original) A method according to claim 24, wherein the speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals is an energy level corresponding to each of the compressed media signals.

28. (original) A method according to claim 23, wherein the media data packets are audio/video data packets and the compressed media signals defined by the media data packets are compressed audio/video signals.

29. (original) A method according to claim 23, wherein said selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers comprises, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal contains speech based on the corresponding speech parameter;

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to a previously selected talker if determined that the compressed media signal contains speech;

determining whether a maximum number of talkers parameter is met if determined that the compressed media signal does not correspond to a previously selected talker;

a.1 discarding the compressed media signal in the case that the maximum number of talkers parameter is met; and

selecting the source corresponding to the compressed media signal as a talker within the media conference in the case that the maximum number of talkers parameter is not met.

30. (original) A method according to claim 23 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to a talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to a talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal and outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the sources within the media conference except the source corresponding to the compressed media signal.

31. (original) A method according to claim 23, wherein the set of the sources within the media conference selected as talkers comprises one of first and

second sources selected within the media conference as primary and secondary talkers respectively, one of the sources selected within the media conference as a lone talker, and none of the sources selected within the media conference as a talker.

32. (original) A method according to claim 31 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the lone talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the lone talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal and outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the sources within the media conference except the source corresponding to the compressed media signal.

33. (original) A method according to claim 31 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to one of the primary and secondary talkers within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to one of the primary and secondary talkers, encapsulating the compressed media signal and outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the sources within the media conference except the source corresponding to the compressed media signal.

34. (original) A method according to claim 31 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary

talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal, outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the primary talker within the media conference, determining whether the compressed media signal has been generated for previously, saving the compressed media signal if not previously generated for; and discarding the compressed media signal if previously generated for.

35. (original) A method according to claim 31 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

a1 determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal, outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the primary talker within the media conference, determining whether the compressed media signal has been generated for previously; if not previously generated for, decompressing the compressed media signal, resulting in a secondary media signal, and saving the secondary media signal; and, if previously generated for, discarding the compressed media signal.

36. (original) A method according to claim 31 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal; outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; decompressing the compressed media signal, resulting in a primary media signal; determining whether a corresponding secondary media signal is saved; if a corresponding secondary media signal is not saved, generating a

secondary media signal; mixing the primary and secondary media signals into a single combined media signal; encapsulating the combined media signal; and outputting the encapsulated combined media signal to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

37. (original) A method according to claim 36 further comprising decompressing the secondary media signal prior to mixing it with the primary media signal if the secondary media signal is saved only in compressed form.

al 38. (original) A method according to claim 31 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal; outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; decompress the compressed media signal, resulting in a primary media signal; determining whether a corresponding secondary media signal is saved; if a corresponding secondary media signal is not saved, monitoring for receipt of a media data packet from the secondary talker for a predetermined time period; if the predetermined time period expires and no media data packet corresponding to the secondary talker has been received, generating a secondary media signal; mixing the primary and secondary media signals into a single combined media signal; encapsulating the combined media signal; and outputting the encapsulated combined media signal to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

39. (original) A method according to claim 31 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signal:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal; outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; determining whether a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is saved; if a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is not saved, generating a compressed media signal for the secondary talker; encapsulating the compressed media signals corresponding to the primary and secondary talkers into a combined media data packet; and outputting the combined media data packet to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

40. (original) A method according to claim 31 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal; outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; determining whether a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is saved; if a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is not saved, monitoring for receipt of a media data packet from the secondary talker for a predetermined time period; if the predetermined time period expires and no media data packet corresponding to the secondary talker has been received, generating a compressed media signal for the secondary talker; encapsulating the compressed media signals corresponding to the primary and secondary talkers into a combined media data packet; and outputting the combined media data packet to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

41. (original) A method according to claim 23, wherein the set of the sources within the media conference selected as talkers comprises one of first, second and third sources selected within the media conference as primary, secondary and tertiary talkers, first and second sources selected within the media conference as primary and secondary talkers respectively, one of the sources selected within the media conference as a lone talker, and none of the sources selected within the media conference as a talker.

42. (original) A method according to claim 41 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the tertiary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the tertiary talker, encapsulating the compressed media signal and outputting the encapsulated compressed media signal to the primary and secondary talkers within the media conference.

43. (original) A method according to claim 41 further comprising, for each of the received compressed media signals:

determining whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the tertiary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the tertiary talker, decompressing the compressed media signal, resulting in a tertiary media signal; saving the tertiary media signal; separately mixing the tertiary media signal with primary and secondary media signals to generate a first mixed media signal and a second mixed media signal respectively; encapsulating the first and second mixed media signals; and outputting the first and second mixed media signals to the secondary and primary talkers respectively within the media conference.

44. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising:

means for receiving at least one media data packet from at least two sources forming a media conference, each media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a compressed media signal and packet overhead;

means for removing the packet overhead;

means for determining at least one speech parameter corresponding to each of the compressed media signals; and

means for selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based on the determined speech parameters.

45. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 44 further comprising:

means for generating media data packets corresponding to the compressed media signals received from at least one of the sources selects as a talker; and

means for outputting the generated media data packets.

46. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising:

a receiver capable of being coupled to a network, said receiver to receive at least one media data packet from at least two sources forming a media conference, each media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a compressed media signal and packet overhead, wherein the receiver removes the packet overhead;

an energy detection and talker selection unit coupled to said receiver to process the received compressed media signals including selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers, one of the talkers being a lead talker; and

an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit to output media data packets that correspond to compressed media signals received from the talkers; and

wherein the media data packets corresponding to the lead talker are always output

from the conference bridge in the same order as the media data packets which are received from the lead talker.

47. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 46, wherein the media data packets are audio data packets and the compressed media signals within each of the media data packets are compressed audio signals.

48. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 46, wherein each of the media data packets received from the sources comprises a time stamp; and

91 wherein the receiver operates further to save the time stamps corresponding to the media data packets received from the lead talker and the output unit operates further to insert the saved time stamps within the corresponding media data packets output from the conference bridge.

49. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 46, wherein to process the received compressed media signals, the energy detection and talker selection unit operates to determine at least one speech parameter associated with each of the compressed media signals and select a set of the packet-based terminals within the media conference as talkers based upon the determined speech parameters.

50. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 49, wherein the set of the sources within the media conference selected as talkers comprises one of first and second sources selected within the media conference as primary and secondary talkers respectively, one of the sources selected within the media conference as a lone talker, and none of the sources selected within the media conference as a talker.

51. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 50 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the lone talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the lone talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal and output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the sources within the media conference except the source corresponding to the compressed media signal.

a 52. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 50 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to one of the primary and secondary talkers within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to one of the primary and secondary talkers, encapsulate the compressed media signal and output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the sources within the media conference except the source corresponding to the compressed media signal.

53. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 50 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal, output the encapsulated compressed media

signal to the primary talker within the media conference, determine whether the compressed media signal has been generated for previously, save the compressed media signal if not previously generated for; and discard the compressed media signal if previously generated for.

54. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 50 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker within the media conference; and

AI if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the secondary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal, output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the primary talker within the media conference, determine whether the compressed media signal has been generated for previously; if not previously generated for, decompress the compressed media signal, resulting in a secondary media signal, and save the secondary media signal; and discard the compressed media signal if previously generated for.

55. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 50 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal; output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; decompress the compressed media signal, resulting in a primary media signal; determine whether a corresponding secondary media signal is saved; if a corresponding secondary media signal is not saved, generate a secondary media signal; mix the primary and secondary media signals into a single combined media signal;

encapsulate the combined media signal; and output the encapsulated combined media signal to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

56. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 55, wherein the output unit further operates to decompress the secondary media signal prior to mixing it with the primary media signal if the secondary media signal is saved only in compressed form.

57. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 50 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

Al determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal; output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; decompress the compressed media signal, resulting in a primary media signal; determine whether a corresponding secondary media signal is saved; if a corresponding secondary media signal is not saved, monitor for receipt of a media data packet from the secondary talker for a predetermined time period; if the predetermined time period expires and no media data packet corresponding to the secondary talker has been received, generate a secondary media signal; mix the primary and secondary media signals into a single combined media signal; encapsulate the combined media signal; and output the encapsulated combined media signal to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

58. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 50 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal; output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; determine whether a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is saved; if a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is not saved, generate a compressed media signal for the secondary talker; encapsulate the compressed media signals corresponding to the primary and secondary talkers into a combined media data packet; and output the combined media data packet to the sources within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

59. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 50 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit that operates, for each of the received compressed media signals, to:

determine whether the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker within the media conference; and

if determined that the compressed media signal corresponds to the primary talker, encapsulate the compressed media signal; output the encapsulated compressed media signal to the secondary talker within the media conference; determine whether a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is saved; if a corresponding compressed media signal associated with the secondary talker is not saved, monitor for receipt of a media data packet from the secondary talker for a predetermined time period; if the predetermined time period expires and no media data packet corresponding to the secondary talker has been received, generate a compressed media signal for the secondary talker; encapsulate the compressed media signals corresponding to the primary and secondary talkers into a combined media data packet; and output the combined media data packet to the sources

within the media conference except the primary and secondary talkers.

60. (original) A packet-based network comprising a conference bridge and a plurality of packet-based terminals;

wherein at least two of the plurality of packet-based terminals operates to output media data packets comprising compressed media signals, these packet-based terminals together forming a media conference;

wherein the conference bridge operates to receive the media data packets from the packet-based terminals within the media conference; to process the compressed media signals corresponding to the received media data packets including selecting a set of the packet-based terminals within the media conference as talkers; and to output media data packets that correspond to the compressed media signals received from the talkers; and

wherein at least one of the packet-based terminals within the media conference further operates to receive the media data packets output from the conference bridge and to process these received media data packets including performing a jitter buffering operation, the jitter buffering operations being performed within the packet-based terminals only.

61. (original) A network comprising a packet-based network, a conference bridge coupled to the packet-based network, a non-packet-based telephone network, at least one packet-based apparatus coupled between the packet-based network and the non-packet-based telephone network, and a plurality of sources for media signals that are each coupled to the non-packet-based telephone network;

wherein the conference bridge comprises conferencing control logic to receive at least one media data packet from at least two of the sources forming a media conference, each media data packet defining a compressed media signal; to process the received compressed media signals including selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers; and to output media data packets that correspond to the compressed media signals received from the

talkers; and

wherein at least one of the packet-based apparatus operates to receive the media data packets output from the conference bridge and to process these received media data packets including performing a jitter buffering operation, the jitter buffering operations being performed within the packet-based apparatus only.

62. (original) A method of processing compressed media signals within a media conference, the method comprising:

M receiving at least one compressed media packet from at least two sources forming the media conference, each media data packet defining a compressed media signal;

processing the received compressed media signals including selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers;

outputting media data packets that correspond to compressed media signals received from the talkers;

receiving the media data packets that correspond to compressed media signals received from the talkers at one or more packet-based apparatus; and

processing the received compressed media signals including performing a first and only jitter buffering operation.

63. (original) A method according to claim 62, wherein the one or more packet-based apparatus each comprise one of the sources forming the media conference.

64. (original) A method according to claim 62, wherein the processing the received compressed media signals further includes a decompression operation which outputs uncompressed media signals corresponding to the received compressed media signals; and

wherein the method further comprises forwarding the uncompressed media signals to at least one of the sources forming the media conference.

65. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising conferencing control logic to:

receive at least one media data packet from at least two sources forming a media conference, each media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a compressed media signal and packet overhead;

remove the packet overhead;

process the received compressed media signals including selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers, one of the talkers being a lead talker; and

91 output media data packets that correspond to compressed media signals received from the talkers; and

wherein the media data packets corresponding to the lead talker are always output from the conference bridge in the same order as the media data packets which are received from the lead talker.

66. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising:

means for receiving at least one media data packet from at least two sources forming a media conference, each media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a compressed media signal and packet overhead;

means for performing initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead;

means for processing the received compressed media signals including means for selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers, one of the talkers being a lead talker; and

means for outputting media data packets that correspond to the lead talker always in the same order as the media data packets which are received from the lead talker.

67. (original) A packet-based apparatus, comprising:

a receiver capable of being coupled to a network, said receiver to receive a media data packet from a conference bridge, the media data packet defining two or more compressed media signals, and perform initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead; and

an output unit coupled to the receiver to decompress each of the compressed media signals in order to generate corresponding uncompressed media signals, mix the uncompressed media signals into a combined media signal, and output the combined media signal.

68. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 67, wherein the media data packet is an audio data packet and the compressed media signals within the media data packet are compressed audio signals.

69. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 67, wherein to perform initial processing of the received media data packet, the receiver further comprises buffering each of the compressed media signals for jitter after the removing of the packet overhead from the received media data packet.

70. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 67, wherein the output unit operates further to buffer each of the uncompressed media signals for jitter prior to the mixing of the signals.

71. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 67, wherein the receiver operates further to receive a second media data packet from the conference bridge, the second media data packet defining a single compressed media signal, and perform initial processing of the received second media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead; and

wherein the output unit operates further to decompress the single compressed media signal in order to generate a single uncompressed media signal and output the single uncompressed media signal.

72. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 67 further comprising a speaker coupled to the output unit to receive the combined media signal and broadcast audio signals corresponding to the received combined media signal.

73. (original) A packet-based network interface comprising a packet-based apparatus according to claim 67, wherein the combined media signal is arranged to be output, via a non-packet-based network, to a non-packet-based telephone terminal.

74. (original) A packet-based apparatus, comprising control logic to:

- receive a media data packet from a conference bridge, the media data defining two or more compressed media signals ;
- perform initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead;
- decompress each of the compressed media signals in order to generate corresponding uncompressed media signals;
- mix the uncompressed media signals into a combined media signal; and
- output the combined media signal.

75. (original) A packet-based apparatus, comprising:

- means for receiving a media data packet from a conference bridge, the media data defining two or more compressed media signals;
- means for performing initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead;

means for decompressing each of the compressed media signals in order to generate corresponding uncompressed media signals;

means for mixing the uncompressed media signals into a combined media signal; and

means for outputting the combined media signal.

76. (original) A method of outputting a combined media signal comprising: receiving a media data packet from a conference bridge, the media data packet defining two or more compressed media signals;

performing initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead;

decompressing each of the compressed media signals in order to generate corresponding uncompressed media signals;

mixing the uncompressed media signals into a combined media signal; and outputting the combined media signal.

77. (original) A packet-based apparatus, comprising:

a receiver capable of being coupled to a network, said receiver to receive a media data packet from a conference bridge, the media data packet defining a compressed media signal, and perform initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead; and

an output unit coupled to the receiver to decompress the compressed media signal in order to generate a first uncompressed media signal, identify at least one other uncompressed media signal that corresponds to the first uncompressed media signal, mix the first uncompressed media signal with the other uncompressed media signal into a combined media signal, and output the combined media signal.

78. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 77, wherein the media data packet is an audio data packet and the compressed media signal within the media data packet is a compressed audio signal.

79. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 77, wherein to perform initial processing of the received media data packet, the receiver further comprises buffering the compressed media signal for jitter after the removing of the packet overhead from the received media data packet.

80. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 77, wherein the output unit operates further to buffer the uncompressed media signal for jitter prior to the mixing of the signals.

81. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 77, wherein the receiver operates further to receive a second media data packet from the conference bridge, the second media data packet defining a second compressed media signal, and perform initial processing of the received second media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead; and
wherein the output unit operates further to decompress the second compressed media signal in order to generate a second uncompressed media signal and output the second uncompressed media signal.

82. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 77, wherein to identify at least one other uncompressed media signal that corresponds to the first uncompressed media signal, the output unit operates further to determine a first identification item within the packet overhead of the received media data packet and locate at least one other uncompressed media signal that corresponds to a received media data packet comprising a second identification item that relates to the first identification item.

83. (original) A packet-based terminal according to claim 82, wherein the first and second identification items comprise time stamps.

84. (original) A packet-based apparatus according to claim 77 further comprising a speaker coupled to the output unit to receive the combined media signal and broadcast audio signals corresponding to the received combined media signal.

85. (original) A packet-based network interface comprising a packet-based apparatus according to claim 77, wherein the combined media signal is arranged to be output, via a non-packet-based network, to a non-packet-based telephone terminal.

86. (original) A packet-based apparatus, comprising control logic to:

- receive a media data packet from a conference bridge, the media data packet defining a compressed media signal;
- perform initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead;
- decompress the compressed media signal in order to generate a first uncompressed media signal;
- identify at least one other uncompressed media signal that corresponds to the first uncompressed media signal;
- mix the first uncompressed media signal with the other uncompressed media signal into a combined media signal; and
- output the combined media signal.

87. (original) A packet-based apparatus, comprising:

- means for receiving a media data packet from a conference bridge, the media data

packet defining a compressed media signal;

means for performing initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead;

means for decompressing the compressed media signal in order to generate a first uncompressed media signal;

means for identifying at least one other uncompressed media signal that corresponds to the first uncompressed media signal;

means for mixing the first uncompressed media signal with the other uncompressed media signal into a combined media signal; and

means for outputting the combined media signal.

88. (original) A method of outputting a combined media signal comprising: receiving a media data packet from a conference bridge, the media data packet defining a compressed media signal;

performing initial processing of the received media data packet comprising removing the packet overhead;

decompressing the compressed media signal in order to generate a first uncompressed media signal;

identifying at least one other uncompressed media signal that corresponds to the first uncompressed media signal;

means for mixing the first uncompressed media signal with the other uncompressed media signal into a combined media signal; and

outputting the combined media signal.

89. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising:

a receiver capable of being coupled to a network to receive at least one first media data packet from at least one source within a media conference, each first media data packet

defining comprising a first compressed media signal and packet overhead, and receive at least one second media data packet from at least one other conference bridge, each second media data packet defining comprising at least one second compressed media signal and packet overhead corresponding to a particular source within the media conference, wherein the receiver removes the packet overhead of the at least one first media data packet and the at least one second media data packet; and

an energy detection and talker selection unit coupled to the receiver to select a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based upon the compressed media signals within both the first and second media data packets.

90. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 89, wherein the first and second media data packets are audio data packets and the compressed media signals within the first and second media data packets are compressed audio signals.

91. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 89, wherein each of the second media data packets comprises a single compressed media signal, the compressed media signal corresponding to one of a lone talker, a primary talker and a secondary talker selected by the other conference bridge in which the particular media data packet was received from.

92. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 89, wherein each of the second media data packets comprises at least two compressed media signals, the compressed media signals corresponding to at least a primary talker and a secondary talker selected by the other conference bridge in which the particular media data packet was received from.

93. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 89 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit to encapsulate compressed media signals corresponding to the selected talkers and output these encapsulated compressed media

signals to the source that the conference bridge receives the first media data packet unless the particular source is selected as a talker.

94. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 89 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit to encapsulate compressed media signals corresponding to the selected talkers and output these encapsulated compressed media signals to the at least one other conference bridge.

95. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 89 further comprising an output unit coupled to the energy detection and talker selection unit to encapsulate compressed media signals corresponding to the selected talkers and output these encapsulated compressed media signals to the at least one other conference bridge unless the particular compressed media signals were received from the at least one other conference bridge prior to receiving the signals from another source.

96. (original) A conference bridge according to claim 89, wherein to select a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers, the energy detection and talker selection unit operates to determine at least one speech parameter corresponding to each of the first and second compressed media signals and select a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based on the determined speech parameters.

97. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising:
a receiver capable of being coupled to a network to receive at least one media data packet from at least one other conference bridge, each media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising at least one compressed media signal and packet overhead corresponding to a particular source within a media conference, wherein the receiver removes the packet overhead of the at least one media data packet; and

an energy detection and talker selection unit coupled to the receiver to select a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based upon the compressed media signals within both the media data packets.

98. (currently amended) A conference bridge, comprising conferencing control logic to:

receive at least one first media data packet from at least one source within a media conference, each first media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a at least one first compressed media signal and packet overhead;

remove the packet overhead of the at least one first media data packet;

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receive at least one second media data packet from at least one other conference bridge, each second media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising at least one second compressed media signal and packet overhead corresponding to a particular source within the media conference;

remove the packet overhead of the at least one second media data packet; and

select a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based upon the compressed media signals within both the first and second media data packets.

99. (currently amended) A method for selecting a set of talkers within a media conference, comprising:

receiving at least one first media data packet from at least one source within a media conference, each first media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising a at least one first compressed media signal and packet overhead;

removing the packet overhead of the at least one first media data packet;

receiving at least one second media data packet from at least one other conference bridge, each second media data packet ~~defining~~ comprising at least one second compressed media signal and packet overhead corresponding to a particular source within the media

conference;

removing the packet overhead of the at least one second media data packet; and
selecting a set of the sources within the media conference as talkers based upon
the compressed media signals within both the first and second media data packets.

100. (currently amended) A packet-based apparatus, comprising:

CM a receiver capable of being coupled to a network to receive at least one first media data packet from a first source within a media conference, each first media data packet defining a at least one first compressed media signal; receive at least one second media data packet from a second source within the media conference, each second media data packet defining at least one second compressed media signal; and perform initial processing of the at least one received first and second media data packets comprising removing the packet overhead; and

an output unit coupled to the receiver to decompress each of the first and second compressed media signals in order to generate corresponding first and second uncompressed media signals, mix the first and second uncompressed media signals into a combined media signal, and output the combined media signal.
